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SIPDIS

FOR S/CT RHONDA SHORE AND PASS NCTC

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TAGS: PTER ASEC LO  
SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA: 2008 COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM

REF: 08 STATE 120019

¶1. Per reftel, Post is submitting the 2008 Country Report on Terrorism for Slovakia. Embassy POC for this report is Political/Economic Chief Susan Ball, office phone 4212-5592-3412; email:BallSM@state.gov.

General Assessment

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¶2. No transnational terrorist or extremist organizations have a significant presence in Slovakia, although Slovak officials believe extremists are likely to have transited through the country in the past. Slovak officials describe the local Muslim population as small, approximately 5000. The Slovak police closely monitor the community, which is comprised mostly of students, and do not believe that it contains a significant number of radicalized members. In 2008, a group of four Middle Eastern men were detected possibly surveilling the U.S. Embassy. Slovak officials have cooperated closely with the Embassy on this matter.

¶3. A suspected terrorist, Mustapha Labsi, has been held in Slovak custody since May 2007. In November 2007, the Bratislava Regional Court approved a Slovak Government request to extradite him to Algeria where he has been convicted in absentia to life in prison. In January 2008, the Supreme Court confirmed this decision. In June 2008, the Constitutional Court ruled that the Supreme Court must verify that Labsi will not face torture upon extradition. In December 2008 the Migration Office again denied Labsi's request for asylum in Slovakia, which he appealed.

¶4. The primary police unit responsible for investigating criminal offenses related to terrorism is the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) of the Organized Crime Bureau. The CTU is authorized to carry out criminal investigations and make arrests of suspected terrorist or extremists within the country. It also has the mandate to develop Slovakia's counterterrorism strategy. The most recent version, approved in October 2007, focuses on developing the legislative and institutional framework to combat terrorism, as well as strengthen the coordination, collaboration and exchange of information among key institutional actors. The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of the Organized Crime Bureau and the Slovak Information Service (SKIS) also have counter-terrorism responsibilities.

Foreign Government Cooperation

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¶5. Although Slovakia is not a leader in multinational counterterrorism activities, Slovakia cooperates closely with a range of international partners in numerous fora. For example, Slovak police participate in the Police Working Group on Terrorism, a consortium of EU member states, Norway and Switzerland. The Slovak Information Service (SKIS) is engaged in the Club de Berne, which facilitates exchange of

police and intelligence information on terrorism. It also participates in the EU's Joint Situation Center.

¶16. Cooperative ties with other EU member states, as well as with the U.S., have strengthened as a result of Slovakia's accession to Europe's border-free Schengen zone on December 21, 2007, and entry into the U.S. Visa Waiver Program on November 17, 2008. In order to qualify for the VWP regime, the Slovaks signed a Security Memorandum of Understanding with the USG in March 2008. Implementing agreements included one based on Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6 (HSPD-6), which seeks to establish joint efforts to prevent and address international terrorism, and one based on the German "Pruem" agreement, also known as the agreement for Preventing and Combating Crime, which enables law enforcement officers in both countries to share specific information on individuals convicted or suspected of terrorism or serious crimes.

¶17. The USG provided assistance to Slovakia's efforts to secure its borders against terrorist threats in 2008. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) conducted a Commodity Identification Training for 12 Slovak Customs Officers in November 2008. The training focused on the identification of dual-use goods that may be misused for illicit WMD programs. In April 2008, the USG donated three hand-held metal analyzers to the Slovaks, two of which are used on the Ukrainian border, and one of which is used as a roving unit. These units provide the Customs Directorate with a fast and non-invasive way to identify metals and prevent illicit transfers of materials, equipment, and technology.

¶18. In August 2008, at the request of the Slovak Customs, U.S. Customs and Border protection held a 5 day anti-corruption and integrity enhancement course in Bratislava. 32 Slovak participants, including investigators, prosecutors, and analysts in the Customs Service, Alien and Border Police, Police Presidium, Ministries of Interior and Justice, and Special Court took part in the 5-day course taught by 4 trainers from Washington D.C.

¶19. In 2008, Slovakia increased the level of its permanent deployment to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan to 175, more than doubling its contingent.

OBSITNIK